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THE BEGINNINGS OF THE REFORM MOVEMENT IN JUDAISM.

THE Jew has always been susceptible to the influences at work in the environment in which he has chanced to be. His mind is singularly open to the thought-waves that permeate his intellectual surroundings. The keen inquirer can learn often the leading cultural *motifs* of the various civilizations in whose midst the Jew has dwelt by familiarizing himself with the remains of Jewish literary achievement. From the earliest times this has been the case. The Bible indicates in many a passage the proneness of the Israelites to adopt the customs of the surrounding peoples and to accept their view-points of religion and life¹. That the Babylonian civilization with which the Jews came into contact during the exile and after left more than a passing effect there can be little doubt; the feast of Purim may be instanced as a striking proof of this; Babylonian in origin it was given a Jewish dress and became incorporated into the system of Jewish observance². Thus, too, the Persian environment in which the Jews found themselves after the passing of the Babylonian empire into the power of Cyrus and his successors left its mark³; to mention but one result of the contact with Zoroastrian beliefs it is only necessary to refer to the

¹ Num. xxv. 3; 1 Sam. viii. 5 ff.; 1 Kings xi. 7; 2 Kings xxiii. 11; Amos v. 26; Hosea iv. 12; Jer. vii. 18, xlv. 17, 18, 19, 25.

² Zimmern, "Zur Frage nach dem Ursprung des Purimfestes," *ZAW.*, XI, 157-169; C. H. Toy, "Esther as a Babylonian Goddess," *New World*, VI, 130-145.

³ Erik Stave, *Ueber den Einfluss des Parsismus auf das Judenthum*, Haarlem, 1898.

influence of the Persian system of angelology and demonology on Jewish thought¹; the so-called Hellenistic movement among the Jews of the two pre-Christian centuries is indication sufficient of the hospitality afforded to Greek thought²; the writings of Philo testify to the welcome which was accorded the Alexandrian neo-Platonic philosophy; in the Talmud³ there are indications that Jews of the early Christian centuries were influenced by customs and thoughts that prevailed among their neighbours; traces of neo-Persian influence are not wanting⁴; the Arabic philosophical movement is reflected in the pages of Saadia's *Faith and Knowledge*, and the Aristotelian revival in Europe through the Christian scholiasts finds its Jewish counterpart in the Judeo-Spanish mediaeval philosophers; so pronounced, in fact, was the mirroring of the life and thought of the surrounding Christian world in Jewry that it passed into a popular proverb in the form "wie es sich christelt, jüdet es sich"; the reciprocal influences of Christian and Jewish life⁵ were so pronounced that more than one church council issued edicts prohibiting this. All this free interplay ceased as a matter of course when the ghetto became an established official institution throughout Europe; the Jew, shut up within the ghetto walls and barred from all contact with the outside world by the ghetto gates, gradually became also intellectually ostracized from the thought currents in the world without.

¹ A. Kohut, *Ueber die jüdische Angelologie und Dämonologie in ihrer Abhängigkeit vom Parsismus*, Leipzig, 1866.

² M. Friedländer, *Das Judenthum in der vorchristlichen griechischen Welt*, Vienna, 1897; also in *J. Q. R.*, XIV, 268.

³ Talm. Bab. Soṭah 496; Ab. Zara 446; Meg. 9a, 186; Chag. 146; B. K. 83a. Talm. Jer. Soṭah VII, 1; Meg. I, 11.

⁴ I. M. Jost, *Geschichte des Judenthums und seiner Sekten*, II, 143; A. Kohut, "Was hat die Talmudische Eschatologie aus dem Parsismus aufgenommen?" *ZDMG.*, XXI, 552-591.

⁵ M. Guedemann, *Geschichte des Erziehungswesens und der Cultur der Juden in Deutschland während des XIV. und XV. Jahrhunderts*, 158 ff., Vienna, 1882; A. Berliner, *Persönliche Beziehungen zwischen Christen und Juden im Mittelalter*, Halberstadt, 1882.

The visible material ghetto had as its concomitant the imperceptible intellectual ghetto. The period from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, the era of ghettoism, is coincident with the exclusion of the Jew from all sympathetic concern with the culture of the world. His intellectual outlook was bounded by the Talmud and its dependent disciplines. His *Weltanschauung* was restricted by the narrowing influence of the *Shulchan Arukh* and all that this implies. The constant confinement of the Jewish mind to the study of the Talmud and the casuists resulted in the fantastic ingenuities of pilpulism, and the rigid observance of the enactments codified in the *Shulchan Arukh* made of the religion a legalistic system. Pilpulism and shulchan-arukhism were the logical accompaniments of ghettoism. The jargon went hand in hand with these phenomena. The degradation of the Jewish communities of Europe was almost complete by the middle of the eighteenth century. They were cramped intellectually; they were social pariahs; politically they were non-existent; they spoke a language which was a strange conglomerate of Hebrew and German with a sprinkling of terms and phrases from the other languages of Europe. The systematic exclusion of centuries had done its work. But this could not last for ever. It was unnatural. The Jew must once again come into contact with the larger world, and when this would prove to be the case he would follow the example of former generations, as just recounted; would emerge from the intellectual prison-house in which he had been confined during the ghetto centuries and participate in the highest cultural aspirations of his time; the form which the public expression of his religion had assumed, and the interpretation which the religion had received during these dark ages, would be subjected to searching examination in the light of the broader culture; intellectual and religious emancipation usually advance *pari passu*; it is the story of religious reform resulting from the acquisition of intellectual freedom and civil

emancipation among the Jews that it is my purpose to narrate in these pages.

Although the reform movement in Judaism was practically the achievement of the nineteenth century, yet can it not be understood unless we succeed in tracing its connexion with other phenomena in the life of the Jews. No religious movement of this kind is isolated. It is the outcome of preceding causes. The immediate causes in this case were three; first, the new intellectual movements inaugurated among the Jews along lines different from the old methods¹; secondly, the linguistic emancipation—if I may so term the acquisition by the Jews of a pure language—through the medium of Mendelssohn's Bible translation; this pure language displaced the jargon, and enabled the Jews to participate in the remarkable literary awakening that took place in Germany in the closing quarter of the eighteenth century and to acquire the culture of the time²; and, thirdly, the civil emancipation which began with the act of Sept. 27, 1791, of the National Assembly of France, which declared the Jews citizens of the country, and the similar enactment of the Batavian Republic in 1795. These things caused a complete revolution in Jewry. The Jews were being brought once again into touch with the life and culture of the world. The old order was changing. New hopes and ideals stirred hundreds among the people. In all the larger communities of Germany men who had acquired the new learning began to appear. Although comparatively few in number at first their influence was none the less telling chiefly because of their attainments. A sign of the times was the publication of the Jewish magazine, *Ham-meassef*, in Königsberg in

¹ Jost, *Geschichte des Judenthums und seiner Sekten*, III, 317; Holdheim, *Geschichte der Entstehung und Entwicklung der jüdischen Reformgemeinde in Berlin*, 23 (Berlin, 1857); M. Levin, *Die Reform des Judenthums*, 19 (Berlin, 1895).

² Zunz, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden*, 14; Geiger's *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift für jüdische Theologie*, V, 7; Holdheim, *Berliner Reformgemeinde*, 14; S. Stern, *Geschichte des Judenthums*, 184.

1783; the band of men who wrote for its pages, mostly friends or disciples of Mendelssohn and known as the *Meassefim*, did much towards spreading the new culture among their co-religionists¹. Although these phenomena caused unwonted disquiet in the Jewish communities, Rabbis of the old school felt correctly that the new education was dealing a death-blow to the old era; hence their anathema against Mendelssohn's translation of the Pentateuch and Hartwig Wessely's open letter to his co-religionists which advised them to educate their children along the lines laid down in the Toleration Edict of the Emperor Joseph II of Austria in 1784, viz. in secular branches and in the German language. But anathemas cannot stay the progress of events. They are usually the last resort of the entrenched authorities who feel their power waning. An interesting side-light is thrown on the conditions at this critical juncture, when the old Judaism was struggling to retain its hold and the new had not yet made its appearance, by the document addressed by one of the foremost rabbis of the time to his congregation. I refer to the letter of farewell written by Rabbi Hirschl Levin, the aged chief rabbi of the Berlin community. He was not a fanatic. He did not join with other rabbis in their denunciation of Mendelssohn and Wessely. On the contrary he was an admirer of Mendelssohn. This rabbinical chief was greatly distressed at the disquieting conditions prevalent in Germany's chief Jewish congregation towards the close of the eighteenth century. He recognized that changes were impending, but he could not comprehend what it all meant. Judaism seemed to him to be threatened with some great danger and to be near dissolution. Because

¹ The chief writers for this magazine were Isaac Euchel who translated the Prayer Book and also the Book of Proverbs; the celebrated physician, Michael Friedländer; the ingenuous grammarian, Joel Loewe of Breslau; the philologist, Isaac Satanow of Berlin; Herz Homburg, superintendent of the Jewish schools in the Austrian empire that were founded after the formulation of the edict of the Emperor Joseph; Hartwig Wessely, and others.

of this sad situation he states that he desires to resign his office and go to Jerusalem to end his days in the Holy Land, for he cannot bear to witness any longer the decay of the religious life among his people. From such expressions the inference is drawn readily that the rabbinical interpretation of Judaism had ceased to appeal to a large section of the community. There was a conflict between the demands made by the traditional religion and the life the people were leading. Further, the larger thought, nurtured by the philosophical and literary culture of the time, could find no religious satisfaction in the observance of forms, customs, and ceremonies that had been unhesitatingly and unquestionably accepted by the fathers as constituting an essential element of the faith. No wonder that the old rabbi felt that the ground was slipping from beneath his feet. He and such as he knew but one rule for the Jew, and that was the faithful performance of every jot and tittle of religious observance as codified in the *Shulchan Arukh*. Here, however, were hundreds upon whom this obligation sat lightly, aye, who disregarded utterly many an injunction that he considered of supreme importance. But although the impending change was in the air, the eighteenth century witnessed but one practical demonstration of the working of the new spirit. This, too, not in Germany but in Holland. In 1796 a congregation was organized in Amsterdam under the name and title *Adath Jeshurun*, whose avowed purpose was to introduce some reforms, but these were so insignificant that although the formation of the congregation was the outcome of great agitation¹, the results were painfully inadequate. These results were merely the abolition of some *piutim*² or liturgical pieces wherewith the synagogal service had become overburdened, and the use of the vernacular in public addresses³.

¹ Jost, *Geschichte der Israeliten*, IX, 120.

² Geiger, *Nachgelassene Schriften*, I, 147.

³ Jost's *Israelitische Annalen*, I, 58.

Before passing to the story of the reform movement and detailing its significance and its progress, it may be well to consider briefly the attitude in this matter of Mendelssohn, and of one other prominent figure in eighteenth-century Jewry who made a peculiar attempt towards solving the religious problem involved in the transition from the old life of the ghetto to the new life of the latter days in which he lived. Mendelssohn is frequently spoken of as the originator of the reform movement in Judaism. This rests upon a misconception. True, Mendelssohn made the reform movement possible by giving the impulse to modern education and culture among the Jews. But a religious reformer he was not¹. Quite the contrary. He conformed strictly to every requirement and demand of rabbinical Judaism. His conception of Judaism was that it is divine legislation²; that since the ceremonial law was revealed by God, it has potency and must be observed until it shall be repealed distinctly by another revelation. But Holdheim pointed out in a number of passages³ how poorly taken Mendelssohn's position was in this matter. The Pentateuch as well as the prophets teach positive religious doctrines; therefore Judaism demands belief as well as practice. As for the contention that another revelation is necessary to repeal the ceremonial laws, Holdheim gave utterance to the striking thought that the spirit of the age is also a revelation of God, and that this commanded the abolition of many observances that had religious sanction at one time; besides, many of the ceremonies considered obligatory by the rabbinical Jew are the products of the Talmudic age, were these also revealed? One cannot help but feel that Mendelssohn's position was inconsistent. He would not grant that religious beliefs and practices are subject to the same

¹ Holdheim, *Geschichte der Berliner Reformgemeinde*, 121 note.

² *Jerusalem*, 31.

³ *Autonomie der Rabbiner*, 38, 45. *Vorträge über die mosaische Religion*, 59; *Ceremonialgesetz im Messiasreich*, 58, 68.

laws of change and progress as obtain in other provinces of human thought and activity. For him Judaism was a closed chapter. The contention of reform Judaism is the very opposite. For Mendelssohn every ceremony was of eternal validity; for the Jewish reformers ceremonies were transitory expressions of the religious spirit and had to be accommodated to the changing needs of successive ages. But Mendelssohn did not live to see this thought become dominant. In his own life he succeeded in avoiding the conflict between the old Judaism and the new culture; how artificial his position was grows clear from the religious experiences of his own offspring; being children of the era of enlightenment and having received an intellectual training in accordance with the spirit of the time, they could find no satisfaction in the ceremonial observance that passed for Judaism, and all of them abandoned the ancestral faith. There were hundreds in a similar plight; the reform movement was the outcome of the clear thought that distinguished the permanent from the transitory in religion. Mendelssohn, interpreting Judaism to be a mere legislation, could not have formulated such a programme. Hence we repeat that, although his labours on behalf of the intellectual culture of the Jews were one of the moving causes that led to the agitation in Judaism known as the reform movement, he was not a religious reformer, as little as was Ezekiel Landau of Prague, one of the hyper-orthodox rabbis who pronounced the ban upon his German translation of the Pentateuch.

A peculiar attempt at the solution of the religious difficulties in Judaism at the close of the eighteenth century was made by David Friedländer, the best-known of the disciples of Mendelssohn. Friedländer was a man of broad culture and was keenly interested in the forward movements among his co-religionists. He was one of the leading spirits in the foundation of the first school that taught secular branches to Jewish children. This was the Jewish Free School of Berlin, founded in 1778. He was

also active in a literary way, and published among other things a translation of the Hebrew Prayer Book (Berlin, 1786). This translation met with opposition on the part of the rabbis of the old school similar to that aroused by Mendelssohn's Pentateuch translation. Eleazer Fleckeles of Prague denounced it vehemently in a pamphlet, *Olath Zibbur*, and declared the translation of the Hebrew prayers into German to be one of the greatest of sins. Friedländer answered him in an "Open Letter to the German Jews," in which he set forth the necessity of the people understanding the prayers, and denounced the obscurantism that finds in the mere use of the Hebrew some saving power, even though what is prayed in that language be unintelligible.

The distressing condition of affairs among the Jews of Berlin toward the close of the eighteenth century, religiously speaking, led Friedländer to take a fantastic step. As said above, rabbinical Judaism which had degenerated into a casuistical system of legalistic intricacies had lost its hold upon many; the service in the synagogue with its sale of the *mitzwoth*, its disorder, its interminable length, was undignified, and repelled rather than attracted them. Added to this was the fact that these men found the doors leading to the professions or official careers closed to them because they were Jews. All these circumstances led to an extensive abandonment of Judaism. Conversions to Christianity were numerous. This appalling state of affairs induced Friedländer to write in 1799 his notorious "Open Letter of Several Jewish Fathers to Councillor Teller" (*Send-schreiben einiger jüdischer Hausväter an den Probst Teller*). In this communication Friedländer declared himself and his sympathizers ready to accept Christianity, on the condition that they might dispense with the distinctive Christian doctrines such as the trinity, the divinity of Jesus, and the observance of the Christian festivals. He declared further that Judaism in its essentiality requires belief in but three doctrines, the unity of God, the immor-

talities of the soul, and the mission to reach out towards moral perfection. Teller's answer was discouraging as was to be expected from an orthodox Christian; for even though the writers of the letter had expressed their willingness to call themselves Christians, what they proposed was far from a declaration of Christianity; it was the play of *Hamlet* without Hamlet. From the Jewish standpoint, too, Friedländer made a serious mistake. In truth he evidenced by this open letter that he did not understand Judaism. The past development of Judaism cannot be thrown overboard lightly as he purposed to do. Judaism represents a growth, as the Jewish reformers insisted strenuously. True, their opponents declared constantly that this movement implied a complete break with the past: but the scholars and thinkers who are the founders of reform in Judaism justified their standpoint by the fact that their researches had convinced them that in Judaism there was a constant development; that the past furnished ample indications that the stream of thought was ever flowing; that forms, prayers, and ceremonies were the products of different times; "every era in the history of Judaism is of importance; the present can break with the past as little as any separate limb can dissociate itself from the body without suffering serious injury. Such a connexion with the past means not the dominance of dead custom, but the persistence of the living idea which permeates all ages with its vigour, and if it leads to different developments this does not justify a disregard of its origins. If anywhere it is in the religious province that reform alone brings blessing." Thus wrote Geiger¹, and his position was shared by all who understood the true inwardness of the reform movement². In truth, as shall be shown later on, it was the investigations of scholars

¹ "Nothwendigkeit und Mass einer Reform des jüdischen Gottesdienstes," in *Nachgelassene Schriften*, I, 205.

² *Ibid.*, 127, 187, 204. Holdheim, *Verketzerung und Gewissensfreiheit*, passim. Loew, *Gesammelte Schriften*, II, 271. Levin, *Reform des Judenthums*, 80.

into the past productions of the Jewish mind and spirit that laid the foundations for the true reform movement. Friedländer therefore was most superficial in his sensational letter to Teller. If, as has been stated by an apologist for Friedländer¹, this letter was a counsel of despair because of the wholesale defections from Judaism, the proposed remedy was equivalent to killing the patient. I have dwelt at some length upon this incident because it illustrates how deeply the waters of Jewish life were stirred in the years immediately preceding the birth of the reform movement; the ship of Judaism had been loosened from the old moorings and was floundering in strange waters; many had deserted the ship; far-seeing ones among the faithful discerned that the ship required a new anchor; this they found in the movement that reconciled the teachings and practices of Judaism with the culture, the needs and the spirit of the time.

Schools. Israel Jacobson.

The road to the reform movement lay really through the schools of modern tendency that began to be founded among the Jews in the closing decades of the eighteenth century². True, from time immemorial there had been provision for the education of the young. But this education had come to be restricted to purely Hebrew instruction. In Germany the Jewish schools had fallen to a sorry state. The schoolmasters were for the most part uncouth Poles, devoid of all pedagogical ability. The *cheder*, as the Jewish school was called, was synonymous with disorder; the children learned little and the influence of the instructors was not for the best. A thorough-going reform of the school system was necessary if the Jews were once again to participate in the life of the world as seemed likely from

¹ Schreiber, *Reformed Judaism and its Pioneers*, 34 (Spokane, 1892).

² Levin, *Die Reform des Judenthums*, 19. Bernfeld, *Juden und Judenthum im 19ten Jahrhundert*, 28. Jost, *Geschichte des Judenthums und seiner Sekten*, 317.

the signs of the times. This was accomplished by the establishment of schools in various places where training in the Hebrew branches was supplemented by instruction in secular studies ; a decree providing for the establishment of one of these schools declared that "a regular school should be founded in which the children, besides receiving instruction in the religious branches, should be taught pure morality, love for humanity, their duties as subjects, as well as writing, reckoning, language, geography, history, and natural science, in order that the rising generation may be educated to become useful citizens of the State¹." Children reared in such a school could not help but become disaffected with the views and conditions that had been accepted by their parents as a matter of course. The first of these schools in order of time was the Jewish Free School of Berlin, adverted to above as having been founded in 1778 by David Friedländer and his brother-in-law Itzig. This school was superintended for a time by that remarkable thinker, Lazarus Bendavid, a Kantian and a fine spirit. Bendavid was one of the foremost figures among the Jews of the "enlightenment" period ; he had been ordered to leave Vienna by the police on the charge of being an "innovator," because in a pamphlet, "The Characteristics of the Jews," called forth by the Toleration Edict of Joseph II, he had given expression to several very liberal ideas on ceremonialism and religion : the statement which gave the greatest offence was the assertion that the faults of the Jews arose from the oppression to which they had been subjected ; this was construed as an attack on Christianity. Coming to Berlin he lived the quiet life of the thinker, supported himself by grinding lenses after the manner of Spinoza, and lent what influence he possessed to the forward movement among his co-religionists. In 1791 the Wilhelmsschule was instituted in Breslau in accordance with the decree mentioned above ; similar schools were founded in Dessau (Franzschule, 1800),

¹ Breslau, May 21, 1790.

in Seesen by Israel Jacobson (1801), in Frankfort-on-the-Main (the Philanthropin, 1804), in Wolfenbüttel (the Samson school, 1807), in Cassel (1809). It was through the influence exerted by the instruction given in such schools that the first reform of the ritual and the public worship became actualized; in these schools a service was instituted for the pupils in which reforms were introduced that would not have been tolerated in the synagogue; thus the children became accustomed to innovations, and when they grew to maturity often enlisted in the cause of reform¹; frequently when the reformers did not venture to introduce sermons and songs in the vernacular into the service in the synagogue, this was done in the schools, and these school services were attended by many adults who would have felt compunction in encouraging by their presence a similar service in the house of worship proper².

I have mentioned the name of Israel Jacobson in connexion with the foundation of the school at Seesen. He was the man of action who inaugurated the reform movement in Judaism. Born in Halberstadt in 1768, he married at the age of nineteen the daughter of Herz Samson, the wealthy *Hofjude* of Brunswick. Through his business connexions he travelled extensively and noted the peculiar conditions existing among the Jews. Deeply attached to his people and his faith, he could not but view with concern the indifference of the cultured Jews of the period, notably in Berlin, to their religion; the rupture between this cultured class and the mass of the people was becoming more and more pronounced; the Judaism of the synagogue had degenerated into a lifeless formalism; the forms, customs, and ceremonies had usurped the place of the essentials; the public service consisted of an endless recitation of frequently unintelligible liturgical pieces, and was marked by such noise and indecorum as consorted ill with the spirit of devotion;

¹ Jost, *op. cit.*, III, 325.

² *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums*, I, 240.

there was nothing to attract one to whom religion meant something more than the slavish observance of traditional forms that however religiously significant they may once have been, had lost all power to impress. He felt that there must be some middle way between the contemptuous attitude of the so-called enlightened ones towards Judaism and the official expression of the faith from which the living breath had departed, leaving only the dry bones. This middle way spelt reform ; Jacobson became convinced that reforms of some kind must be inaugurated ; he himself was not capable of introducing a thorough-going reform based upon an intimate acquaintance with the sources of Judaism and its development ; he had neither the knowledge nor the grasp to accomplish this. He was neither a scholar nor a philosopher. He was a practical man of great intelligence and some learning who understood the needs of the people. He had the inclination and the means to toil for the improvement of his co-religionists. He proceeded cautiously and began his activity in the cause of reform by founding the school at Seesen as already mentioned. Through his generosity, his wealth, and the prominence of his family connexions he acquired an influential position. His influence grew from year to year because of his untiring activity. The French occupation of western Germany afforded him his long-desired opportunity. The kingdom of Westphalia was formed by Napoleon for the purpose of giving his brother Jerome a throne ; the code of France became the law of the land ; the Jews were benefited by the change ; they received the full rights of citizenship, and by a decree of March 31, 1808, there was established, after the French model, a consistory with its seat in Cassel that was to direct and regulate all Jewish affairs. Jacobson was named president of the consistory. The other members of the consistory were three rabbis and two laymen. The manner in which the consistory was to proceed was a matter of great concern to Jacobson ; he consulted with three of the foremost Jews

of the generation as to the best course to pursue, viz. David Friedländer of Berlin, Professor Wolfsohn of Breslau, and David Fränkel, director of the Francis School of Dessau and an editor of the newly-established magazine *Sulamith*, the first Jewish magazine edited in the German language. Friedländer was particularly insistent that the consistory should blaze a new path. But the officers of the consistory, although giving him a respectful hearing, determined not to antagonize rabbinical Judaism. Jacobson directed the activity of the consistory along the lines he had laid down at Seesen. A school was established at Cassel in which instruction was given in elementary branches. Divine service was held every Saturday in the chapel of the school; the prayers were partly in Hebrew, partly in German; a member of the consistory, frequently the president, delivered an address in the vernacular; German hymns were sung. These slight innovations were the beginning of the reform movement as a practical achievement. The rabbis who were members of the consistory took pains to show that these apparent innovations did not transgress any prescribed rabbinical enactments. The school service met with such favour that Jacobson determined upon a bolder step. He built a temple at Seesen at his own expense, placed an organ in it, and formed a choir from among the pupils of the school. This temple was dedicated with great *éclat* on July 17, 1810. The event was described as the Festival of the Jewish Reformation. Professors, Christian clergymen, and governmental officials were present. Jacobson was enthusiastically praised in more than one literary effusion inspired by the occasion. The dedication of this temple was considered the beginning of a new era for the Jewish people. From this temple a new spirit was to go forth that would revolutionize Jewry. The Jewish people would now emerge from the isolation of centuries. Many of these expressions were bombastic and extravagant. Jacobson, however, seems to have taken them quite seriously. He

really thought that the religious difficulties that were corroding the very vitals of his people were now solved. But the evil lay deeper than he had the power to fathom. The reforms with which his name is associated were purely external. He did all he could according to his light. But he did not, because he could not, penetrate to the heart of the distemper that was playing such havoc with the inherited traditions. He failed to recognize that there was an essential conflict between the viewpoint of rabbinical Judaism and that of the new era which was dawning for the Jews. His was not the philosophical insight to determine and to designate the essentials of the religion, to show how these had been overshadowed by non-essentials and to define the real significance of the ceremonial law and its proper place in the outworking of religious development; his was not the scholarly acumen to set forth clearly the theses that would prove the new movement to be a necessity if Judaism was to continue to influence as a religious force those born within the pale, and if there was not to be a complete break between religion and life. The superficial ills only were evident to him. He noted the estrangement of many from the faith. He observed also that many a custom had crept into the public service that was unaesthetic. The manner of conducting the service offended good taste. Many of the prayers were unintelligible. He thought that these things alone were the causes of the alienation of Jews, especially in the larger cities, from the synagogue. Hence his whole aim was to aestheticize the service; German sermons, German hymns, some German prayers—these he considered the means of making the religion a living entity to his generation as it had been to the fathers. But these few external reforms did not meet the case. They simply touched the rim of the problem. But with all his limitations his fame is secure as the pioneer who led the way in taking active steps towards the reform of the service.

The German sermon as a regular feature of the service

was considered a marked innovation and aroused the opposition of the rabbis of the traditional school. They were accustomed to preach but twice a year, on the Sabbath preceding Passover and on the Sabbath of the penitential season between New Year's Day and the Day of Atonement. In these sermons, or rather expositions, they explained the laws to be observed in connexion with the festivals. They spoke either in Hebrew or in the German-Jewish jargon. To preach in pure German was therefore denounced as an unjustifiable innovation, for no other reason than that it had not been done in the past. True, the dedication of the Jacobson temple was not the first occasion on which a German sermon had been preached in a synagogue, but it gave prominence to the practice and assured it an accredited place in the service as a regular feature. The earliest record we have of such a sermon is connected with the name of Moses Mendelssohn. He wrote three sermons, which were preached in the synagogue of Berlin by the chief rabbi David Hirschel Fränkel, in celebration of the victories of Frederick the Great at Rossbach and Leuthen and of the conclusion of the treaty of peace at Hubertusberg¹. These were, however, exceptional utterances. The first preacher who made a practice of delivering sermons in German was Joseph Wolf, co-editor with David Fränkel of the magazine *Sulamith*. Wolf delivered his first German sermon in Dessau in 1808. Although preaching in the vernacular was considered one of the chief reforms, still was it in reality merely a return to a practice that was quite prevalent in a much earlier day. It is true that such

¹ It is of more than passing interest that the English translation of one of these sermons was the first Jewish publication printed in Philadelphia, U. S. A.: it appeared in the year 1763 under the title "A Thanksgiving Sermon for the Important and Astonishing Victory obtained on the Fifth of December, MDCCCLVII, over the united and far superior Forces of the Austrians in Silesia. Preached on Sabbath, the tenth of said month, at the Synagogue of the Jews in Berlin, by David Hirschel Fränkel, Arch-Rabbi." Translated from the German original printed at Berlin." See Publications of the Amer. Jew. Hist. Soc., I, 63.

preaching had been unknown among the Jews for some time past. But this was due to untoward circumstances. Such as did not know the development of Jewish homiletic effort imagined that there was some inherent objection to it. Here was an instance in which scholarship became the handmaid of reform. In his remarkable and epoch-making book, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden* (Berlin, 1832), Leopold Zunz proved beyond the possibility of a doubt that preaching in the vernacular had obtained among the Jews in many lands in earlier times, and that therefore the outcry against sermons in German as being in violation of Jewish tradition was due to ignorance of that tradition. Jacobson had the correct intuition that preaching in the vernacular might attract to the synagogue some who had become estranged. The rabbis of the old school were living practically in an age that was past; their generation had outgrown them; they were unable to meet the religious requirements of the people; they could not preach; what they called preaching was an explanation of rabbinic observance or a fantastic explanation of Biblical passages which in many instances they did not understand, owing to their ignorance of Hebrew grammar¹; nor could they be expected to preach in a manner edifying to men and women whose outlook upon life and whose interpretation of religion was so much broader than theirs.

As long as rabbinism was the acceptable interpretation of Judaism the spoken word was not missed by the people; the rabbis explained the laws of religious practice which were the be-all of the religious life; the rabbi was not expected to be a preacher, but an adept in casuistical interpretation, with its thousand-branched tree growing from the roots of Talmudical dialectics. But when life began to mean something more than rabbinism could explain satisfactorily, when the two civilizations came into conflict, the old represented by rabbinism and suited only to ghetto-conditions, that is, an existence self-centred

¹ Dembitz, *Services in Synagogue and Home*, 295; Philadelphia, 1898.

and isolated, and the new adopted by the people of the contemporaneous age who had emerged from the exclusion of the ghetto and were sharing in the larger life of their new possibilities, it was inevitable that the old had to give way if the children of the latter days were to be retained within the fold. Their religion would have to be expounded in an intelligible and acceptable manner; hence the necessity, among other things, of the sermon in the vernacular.

To sum up then, we may say that Jacobson's claim to the first place, in point of time, in the history of the reform movement in Judaism is based upon his effort and his success in making the service attractive to many of his contemporaries. The true significance of this earliest effort in behalf of reform lies in the attention it aroused to the possibility of giving Judaism a public expression sympathetic to the living generation. However, this first attempt at reform which is associated with the name of Jacobson must be considered merely the forerunner of the true reform movement whose chief protagonist was Abraham Geiger; this was based upon the historical and philosophical interpretation of the principles of the religion. The Jacobson movement did not spread beyond Westphalia, and even there did not continue long, for with the downfall of Napoleon the Westphalian kingdom ceased to be a French possession, and the French institutions, among them the Jewish consistory, were abolished. This, however, did not end Jacobson's activity in behalf of the reform of the ritual. We shall meet him again as a prominent figure in the early attempts at reform in the Prussian capital, whither he removed after the collapse of the consistory at Cassel.

The French Synhedrin.

We must interrupt the thread of the narrative of the development of the reform movement in Germany for a brief space, in order to cast a glance upon Jewish

conditions in the neighbouring country of France. The Jews of that land had obtained civil emancipation by the act of the Assembly of September 27, 1791. The political events in France were of so absorbing a nature during the next fifteen years that everything else sank into insignificance. There were certainly no inner agitations within the Jewish communities to compare with the stir among the Jews of Germany. The new learning which was the immediate cause of the dissatisfaction with rabbinism among the German Jews had not asserted itself among their French brethren. Although civilly emancipated and to all intents and purposes citizens of France, mediaeval conditions, religiously and intellectually speaking, continued among them. The emancipation of the Jews, too, had not been accepted with equanimity by all classes. There were constant complaints against the unfitness of the Jews for citizenship as being not only distinct in their religion but a strange people within the state¹. Notably from Alsace did these charges emanate, especial stress being laid upon the usurious practices of the Jews, and the consequent helplessness of the peasants who may have fallen into their clutches: the further charge was made that the Jews had no sense of patriotism or civic honour. Napoleon, who from the beginning of his career had been quite favourably disposed toward the Jews, had changed his attitude after the battle of Austerlitz². The affairs of the Jews were discussed at length in several meetings of the council of state in the year 1806. Napoleon, speaking through his mouthpiece Molé, was for curtailing the rights of the Jews³. This met with determined opposition on the part of several members of the council. It was thereupon determined to call a convention of Jewish notabilities, through whom the affairs of the Jews were to be regulated. In a decree issued May 30, 1806, the Emperor commanded

¹ Léon Kahn, *Les Juifs à Paris*, 86 (Paris, 1889).

² Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, XI, 268.

³ Guizot in *Revue des Deux Mondes* for July, 1867, 18-20.

the attendance at Paris in July of that year of the foremost men among the Jews ("une synagogue générale des Juifs"), who were to express the wishes of the Jews and to make such suggestions as should induce their brethren to exchange the degrading occupations that they were engaged in for honourable trades. The call aroused great enthusiasm among Jews of foreign lands¹, who knew nothing of the immediate cause of the Emperor's action or of his own feelings towards his Jewish subjects, which were anything but friendly². The assembly opened on July 26, 1806, in the Hôtel de Ville. There were 110 notables present, who had been selected by the prefects of the various departments of France, of the German provinces that had come under French rule, and of Italy which was likewise under French suzerainty. Abraham Furtado of Bordeaux was elected presiding officer. The most distinguished man of the assembly was David Sinzheim, rabbi in Strasburg³. The Emperor submitted to the second meeting on July 29 twelve questions for discussion and decision. These questions were:—

1. Are Jews permitted to marry several wives?
2. Does the Jewish law permit divorce? Is such divorce valid without the sanction of the civil court or if obtained by laws which are in opposition to the French code?
3. May a Jewess marry a Christian or a Jew a Christian woman? or does the Jewish law permit marriages between Jews only?
4. Do the Jews consider the French their brethren, or do they look upon them as aliens?
5. In either case, what duties does their law prescribe for the Jews towards Frenchmen of other faiths?
6. Do the Jews who are natives of France and are treated as French citizens by the law look upon France

¹ "Reform des Judenthums in Frankreich und Italien," *Sulamith*, II, 3 ff. (Dessau, 1807).

² Kahn, *Les Juifs à Paris*, 88.

³ *Sulamith*, I, 183.

as their fatherland? Do they consider themselves in duty bound to defend it? Are they obliged to obey the laws and to satisfy all the demands of the civil code?

7. Who appoints the rabbis?

8. What magisterial power do the rabbis exercise over the Jews and what judicial authority do they possess?

9. Does their authority rest upon written laws or upon tradition?

10. Are there trades which are forbidden the Jew by his religion?

11. Does their law forbid the Jews to exact usury from their co-religionists?

12. Does it forbid or permit them to exact usury from their non-Jewish fellow citizens?

It was notably the third question which aroused the most active and heated discussion. It was in this debate that the statement was made for the first time in a public assembly that Judaism had been distorted frequently by rabbinical enactments in the course of the centuries, and that it was necessary to return to the Bible as the source and basis of religious practice. Such an utterance indicated clearly that a new era had dawned, and that the people were growing restive under the yoke of rabbinism. The question was answered evasively to the effect that marriage between Israelites and Christians contracted according to the laws of the "Code Civil" are from a civil standpoint binding and valid, and although such marriages cannot be invested with the religious forms, they shall not entail disciplinary punishment (anathema¹). The other questions were readily and satisfactorily answered. The replies of the assembly showed clearly that the Jews were not a "nation within the nation²," that their non-participation in the past in the interests of the nation was not their own fault, but was due to the repressive legisla-

¹ Mielziner, *The Jewish Law of Marriage and Divorce*, 97 (Cincinnati, 1884).

² An expression which had been used by Napoleon himself, "une nation dans la nation"; see Kuhn, *op. cit.*, 88.

tion to which they had been subject, that they were distinct from their compatriots in their religion only. The answers were satisfactory to the Emperor. Desiring to give them the force of law and yet not wishing to issue a special decree for that purpose, he determined to compass this end through the agency of a Jewish legislative body to be known as the Great Synhedrin. In a letter dated August 23, 1806, he wrote to his minister De Champagne that it is his purpose "to constitute the Assembly actually gathered in Paris into a Great Synhedrin, whose acts shall be placed beside those of the Talmud as articles of faith and principles of religious legislation." This body was to consist of seventy-one members, like the great Synhedrin of old in the land of Palestine. The assembly of notables was directed to make all preparations for the session of the Synhedrin. On October 6, 1806, Napoleon issued a decree in Hebrew, French, and Italian, convening the Great Synhedrin. The sessions of the Synhedrin opened on February 9, 1807; its organization was on the lines of the ancient Synhedrin, the presiding officers being called *nassi*, *ab beth din*, and *chacham*. Its meetings continued through one month, final adjournment taking place on March 9. It accomplished little beyond placing the seal of its approval upon the answers of the assembly of notables. It was undoubtedly Napoleon's love for the sensational and the spectacular that prompted him to attempt this revival of the old Jewish legislative body on French soil. The French Synhedrin requires mention in the history of the reform movement because, even if its members did not declare in so many words the repudiation of the traditional belief in the return to Palestine and all the doctrines dependent upon this, yet their answer to the fourth and sixth questions, to the effect that they looked upon Frenchmen as their brethren and France as their native country, implied this, and the answer to the eighth question indicated that they considered rabbinical jurisdiction in civil and judicial matters a thing of the

past. Still, in spite of this approach to the spirit of the reform movement, this latter made but little headway among the French communities beyond some aesthetic improvements in the service here and there; even these external reforms were slow in being adopted, for as late as 1839 the author of the famous Tsarphati letters declared, "If reforms are not introduced the Jews will either become absolutely indifferent or enter the Christian Church¹." Rabbinical Judaism continued to be officially recognized; the reform movement did not make great progress there, and the result was much as Tsarphati predicted.

Early Reforms in Berlin. The Science of Judaism.

The famous edict of March 11, 1812, issued by the King of Prussia, Frederick William III, at the initiative of his noble and liberal-minded prime minister Hardenberg, was interpreted by the Jews of that country, and notably by those living in the city of Berlin, as the beginning of a new period of light and freedom. And in truth they were justified in entertaining this feeling. In unmistakable terms this emancipatory edict removed from the Jewish inhabitants of the Prussian state the restrictions and wrongs of centuries. It declared them to be natives, and raised them to the rank of Prussian citizenship on the condition that they took family names and employed the German or any other living language in place of the jargon in their daily lives and transactions. It gave them permission to settle anywhere in the land and to acquire real estate; it made them eligible for teachers' positions and for communal offices; all restrictive trade conditions were abolished, as well as all special taxes which they had been compelled to pay as Jews. In return they had to assume all the obligations of citizenship, such as taxes and military service. Rabbinical jurisdiction was to cease. There were

¹ Quoted in *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums*, III, 151, from the *Courrier de la Moselle*.

a number of inhibitory paragraphs also, but the general tendency of the edict was such as made for freedom in so marked a degree, that it is not surprising that the Jews of Berlin looked upon it almost in the light of their *magna charta*; the elders of the Jewish community, David Hirsch, Bendix, Friedländer, and Gumpertz, addressed a letter of thankful appreciation to the king¹. True, the edict did not touch the religious affairs of the Jews further than to demand that rabbinical jurisdiction cease; it left expressly for future consideration the ecclesiastical conditions and the education of the Jews, for the regulation of which "men of the Jewish faith who enjoy the public confidence because of their attainments and uprightness"² were to be drawn into consultation. Here again, as in Westphalia, we find that the acquisition of civil emancipation was the beginning of active efforts for religious emancipation. Shortly after the promulgation of this edict David Friedländer wrote a pamphlet, entitled "On the Changes in the Service in the Synagogues made necessary by the new Organization of the Jewish Schools in the Prussian States" (*Ueber die durch die neue Organisation der Judenschulen in den preussischen Staaten nothwendig gewordene Umbildung ihres Gottesdienstes in den Synagogen*. Berlin, 1812). In this pamphlet he indicated the lines along which the religious and educational affairs of the Jews ought to be directed. He dwelt particularly on the necessity of a reorganization of the schools and a reform of the service; the chief features of the latter were to be the abolition of all prayers having a national Jewish colouring and the introduction of the German as the language of the service. This publication met with decided disapproval on the part of the rabbinical Jews, who were opposed to any and every change in the ritual or the customs; the king to whom Friedländer had submitted a copy of the pamphlet was on the point of answering the author to the effect that

¹ Ludwig Geiger, *Geschichte der Juden in Berlin*, 145 (Berlin, 1871).

² Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, XI, 317.

he would give his recommendations consideration on the condition that they involved no innovations; Frederick William was essentially a reactionary; he was prevented from answering in this wise by Hardenberg, who showed him the meritorious points in Friedländer's programme. Hence the prohibition against making any reforms or innovations was not issued; still it was only delayed; after Hardenberg's death it appeared.

The first active step towards reform in Berlin was taken in 1815. In the Prussian capital, as in Westphalia, the reform movement was inaugurated by public-spirited, practical men. Here too, as there, the movement arose from the desire to make the public services decorous and intelligible. Israel Jacobson, who had removed from Cassel to Berlin, established such a service in his own home on the Feast of Weeks in the year 1815 on the occasion of the confirmation of his son; this service was accompanied by organ music, singing by a choir, a German sermon, and prayers in the vernacular¹. The room in Jacobson's house being too small to accommodate all who wished to attend, Jacob Herz Beer, a wealthy banker, father of the celebrated composer Meyerbeer, instituted a similar service in his home². The sermons were delivered by talented young men, Isaac Auerbach, Eduard Kley, Leopold Zunz, Isaac Noa Mannheimer, and Gunzberg, three of whom became commanding figures in later years, Kley as one of the founders and preachers of the reform congregation of Hamburg, whose story will be recounted shortly, Zunz as a master of Jewish scientific research and one of the greatest of scholars, and Mannheimer as the famed preacher of the Viennese congregation. The services were attended by hundreds from among the cultured classes of Berlin Jewry. The government, however, was not in favour of innovations of any kind or anywhere. Notably was the dissatisfaction of cultured Jews with their inherited

¹ *Sulamith*, II, 66.

² *Ibid.*, 68.

faith agreeable to the king, for this led frequently to an abandonment of Judaism and the adoption of Christianity. Further, the rabbis of the old school and their followers were but too ready to appeal to the government against the reformers. These latter had not formed a new organization. They simply conducted these private services, which any one was welcome to attend. But they were not left unmolested long. In 1817 the government ordered all private synagogues to be closed. This was the first definite victory of the adherents of rabbinical Judaism. The order was directed against the two private temples, Jacobson's and Beer's. This is the earliest instance of that disastrous policy of calling in the aid of the government to suppress the reformers which was the cause of so many scandals during the next three decades. When the orthodox leaders saw that the reformers were likely to succeed, or in fact had succeeded, in establishing a foothold, they preferred charges with the government against the reformers as being fomenters of disturbances by the introduction of innovations. I need refer only to the Geiger-Tiktin affair at Breslau¹, the *cause célèbre* of Löwe, the reform rabbi of Fürth in Bavaria², the attitude of Bernays, the orthodox rabbinical chief of Hamburg, towards the reform congregation of that city³, and the disgraceful proceeding of some Jews of orthodox proclivities against Leopold Löw when rabbi of Papa, in Hungary⁴. But it was not only the orthodox party that sinned in this respect; the reformers too were guilty occasionally of compassing their object by the help of the civil power; I need point only to the case of Saxe-Weimar⁵; fairness, however, demands the statement that the orthodox party was given to this course by far more than the reformers. But to return to the case

¹ Geiger, *Die letzten zwei Jahre*, Nachgelassene Schriften, I, 1-51. *Ansprache an meine Gemeinde*, *ibid.*, 52-112.

² *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums*, I, 457; III, 244; V, 610; VIII, 259.

³ *Ibid.*, VI, 108.

⁴ *Ibid.*, XI, 251; XIII, 89.

⁵ *Vide infra*, 618.

in hand. Beer's private temple evaded the immediate consequences of the decree of 1817 by the peculiar circumstance that, owing to the fact that repairs were being made in the chief synagogue, this private temple was used as the temporary communal house of worship. The struggle was now on between the old and the new. The service in the temple met with great favour on the part of many, notably the young. However, the orthodox party would none of it. The rabbinate of Berlin, chief of which was Meyer Simon Weyl, was unalterably opposed to any reform; he would not even sanction the appointment of German preachers (as contradistinguished from the rabbis), whose sole duty was to be the preaching of sermons, while the rabbis were to continue to perform the same functions and wield the same authority as of old. A commission was appointed by the Minister of Religions to suggest a possible solution of the difficulty. A number of compromises were suggested, such as to make the synagogue which was now undergoing repair large enough to accommodate all the Jews of all tendencies of religious thought; and thus to have practically two synagogues under one roof, one orthodox and the other reform; another suggestion was to have two services on Sabbath and holidays; first a service along traditional lines, and after that another service with German prayers and a German sermon. This latter suggestion met with the approval of the Minister of Religions. The orthodox party, sure of the sympathy of the king, appealed to him; they found a ready hearing, and the monarch issued a decree (*Cabinetsordre*) on Dec. 9, 1823, commanding "that the divine services of the Jews must be conducted in accordance with the traditional ritual and without the slightest innovation in language, ceremonies, prayers, or songs¹." A decided reaction had set in in all respects. The high hopes that had been aroused by the edict of 1812 in Prussia and by similar

¹ *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums*, VI, 393. Geiger, *Geschichte der Juden in Berlin*, 234.

emancipatory decrees in other German states had been shattered by the events that had taken place after the downfall of Napoleon and the Congress of Vienna. In several parts of Germany the Jews had been subjected to outrages reminiscent of mediaeval days; the *hep hep* cry resounded in the streets of cities like Frankfort and Würzburg. This reactionary spirit made itself felt also in the movement for religious reform. The year 1823 is marked by a number of restrictive edicts besides the one just mentioned; a rescript of March 11 of that year declared that "the Jewish religion was only tolerated, and that its confessors have no ecclesiastical officials," and similarly the general legislation for Prussia promulgated for that same year stated that "Jewish rabbis are not instructors of youth, and cannot be looked upon as religious teachers in the same sense as Christian clergymen, because they have no ecclesiastical standing such as the Christian clergy have." All this meant the absolute triumph of the orthodox party; the private temples were closed; every innovation in the service was forbidden; efforts in the cause of reform in the chief city of Prussia were intermitted for a number of years. The orthodox element was too short-sighted to see that they were playing directly into the hands of the orthodox Christian king; he had forbidden innovations in the Jewish service on the ground that with the rise of Christianity Judaism had ceased to be a living religion, that it had persisted through the centuries as a dead stock and only as such must it continue; that to introduce reforms and innovations would be equivalent to proving that there was still some life in the religion. The victory of the orthodox party was costly indeed; it was during the years immediately succeeding that the conversions of Jews to Christianity took place in great numbers; this would certainly have been prevented largely had the reform movement not been stifled in the bud. The cultured Jew found the synagogue unattractive and its services unsympathetic; rabbinism belonged to a past

age; he became lost to Judaism altogether either by absolute indifference or by going over to Christianity.

This condition of affairs was made possible further by the fact that the Jews had little or no knowledge of their own past and of the lofty achievements of the Jewish spirit in the ages ago. For the great mass of even the so-called cultured Jews Judaism spelt merely a barren legalism; it was simply the repository of some worn-out customs that were no longer harmonious with the new spirit that had breathed upon the world; even the reformers had been impelled to their acts not by the thought of Jewish development, but by the artificial motive of making the external expression of the faith respond to an aesthetic longing. That Judaism had an intellectual development, that its past presented a tale of worthy religious effort, that it had its own inner life deserving of respectful consideration—these were facts unknown not only to the government (which, upon the information furnished by a Jewish Philistine, had branded the rabbis contemptuously as “Kauscherwächter,” as though the inspection of meats were all of Judaism, and it was therefore unworthy of a place among the religions recognized by the state), not only to the Christian populace that viewed the Jews and Judaism only through the glass of prejudice, but also to the great body of the Jews themselves. The governmental interference with internal Jewish affairs for the stifling of the reform movement and the reactionary events of 1817 and the following years but accentuated this. Then it was that a number of young men conceived the correct idea that salvation could come only from within, that the Jews and the non-Jews must be made acquainted with what Judaism, its history and its literature, really were, that only by research into the past and thus making the science of Judaism (*die Wissenschaft des Judenthums*) the basis of reform would the new movement have stability. These young men, some fifty in number, under the guidance of Leopold Zunz, Moses Moser, and Eduard Ganz, founded in 1819 in Berlin “The

Society for the Advancement of the Science of Judaism" (*Verein für Cultur und die Wissenschaft des Judenthums*¹). Although this Society was able to carry out but a fraction of its ambitious programme, which included the foundation of a Jewish institute of learning, the building up of a great Jewish library, the establishment of a magazine embodying the results of the research into Jewish history and literature²; although, further, the high hopes of the founders ended in disappointment and temporary despair with the dissolution of the Society in 1824, yet had they struck the true note, and its watchword, "The Science of Judaism," was to become the motto of the second movement for reform in Judaism in Germany under the leadership of Geiger, Holdheim, Einhorn, Philippson, Stein, Hirsch, and the other scholarly guides among the second generation of reformers. Zunz, who had begun life as a preacher in the private reform temple of Jacob Herz Beer, applied all his great powers to the field of research after this temple had been closed by the government³. His first great literary work was really the outcome of this incident; it will be remembered that the reason given for this action was that Judaism, being only a lifeless survival since the time of its fruition into Christianity, it could put forth no such new shoots as preaching and prayers in the vernacular or any other innovations that involved a departure from traditional custom and usage⁴. Zunz undertook the task of proving

¹ Because of the special meaning which the term "science" has assumed in English it is difficult to render exactly the German phrase "*Wissenschaft des Judenthums*"; if the word "science" be understood in its original and larger meaning of knowledge and not in the more restricted significance of physical science, the phrase "Science of Judaism" may stand as the equivalent of the German.

² But one volume of this magazine appeared with the title *Zeitschrift für die Wissenschaft des Judenthums* (Berlin, 1823).

³ He had won his spurs before this as an original investigator by his study on the great Jewish commentator Raschi, which had appeared in the magazine mentioned in the previous note; his first publication was an essay on rabbinical literature (Berlin, 1818).

⁴ *Supra*, 20.

the falsity of this position; the theses he set out to establish were that homiletic exercises, such as interpretation of Scripture and preaching in the vernacular, had been customary among the Jews in many localities at different times, that the literary spirit had been constantly active, and that Judaism, far from being a lifeless survival, had put forth new shoots in age upon age, and hence inferentially there was no reason why it should not do so now¹; this work, which was epoch-making in the history of Jewish literature, was entitled *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden*, and appeared in the year 1832. In this book Zunz proved that no one has the right "to prohibit the introduction of new prayers; from the time of the Great Synod to the present day the Jewish liturgy has been constantly enriched by Soferim, synhedrial authorities, teachers of the Mishnah, Emoras, Gaonim, Paitanim, and rabbis, by poets, cantors, congregational leaders, cabbalists². . . . Prayer in the vernacular was permitted by all authorities, yea, even commanded in certain instances³. . . . The most important part of these improvements in the service consists in the return from abuse to normality, from the dead to the living form. Hence resistance to reforms in this field is to be looked for from prejudice and ignorance rather than from true insight⁴." The conclusion at which he arrives as the result of his researches is that reform is the mission of the present generation, whose work it must be to discover the real needs of the present and assert their dominance in the political situation of the Jews, in the field of learning and in the religious province, and, further, to embody these progressive ideas in institutions⁵. The closing paragraph of this book discloses its purpose most clearly, and may be quoted as a classical expression of the hopes and expectations of the early reformers; "the closest attention in the movement for improvements in the service of the synagogue

¹ Ritter, *Samuel Holdheim*, 82 (Berlin, 1865).

Vorträge, 477.

³ *Ibid.*, 478.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 479.

² *Gottesdienstliche*

⁵ *Ibid.*, 475.

should be given to the removal of faults and abuses, and to the reintroduction of regular sermons. Let the speaker be called what he will, preacher or rabbi, teacher or orator, so long as he understands how to expound the word of God from the Bible and the Hagadah, to extract the pure gold from old and new fields, to teach the present generation its true work and to reach all hearts by skilful speech. Then the divine spirit will return to thy temples, O daughter of Zion, and will become manifest in deeds flowing from words of enthusiasm. The rekindled spark will never be quenched again; persecutions will only cause it to flame the more brightly, for reform and the triumph of speech propounding reform are irrevocable as are the victories of freedom and civilization, the civil emancipation of the Jews and their scientific culture¹." Zunz performed a great service for the reform cause by this book; he gave the movement a scientific basis, and pointed the way for future workers². Although modern Jewish research had produced some results before the appearance of this book³, yet will it be considered always the first great achievement of the Jewish literary renaissance of the nineteenth century. Clearly as the book proved the fact of a constant development in Judaism, yet were its effects further reaching than the triumphant establishment of its thesis that this inner development in Judaism demanded and justified sermons in the vernacular, necessary changes in the liturgy, and corresponding reforms. The scientific spirit was revived, and through the influence and devotion of Zunz and such other kindred spirits as Rappoport, Luzzato, Geiger, Krochmal, Reggio, and many others, Judaism celebrated a literary rebirth; these investigators into the products of the Jewish spirit achieved the purpose

¹ *Ibid.*, 481.

² Ritter, *op. cit.*, 81.

³ Rappoport's biographies of Saadia, Chananel, Nathan Hababli, Elazar Kalir, Nissim, and Hai Gaon had appeared in the periodical *Bikkure Haithim* in 1828-1831, and Luzzato's treatise on the Aramaic translation of the Bible in 1830.

set forth in the programme of the "Verein für Cultur und Wissenschaft des Judenthums," viz. "to bring the Jews into harmony with the age and the countries in which they live by means of a development proceeding from within¹."

The Hamburg Temple.

The earliest attempt at reform in Berlin ended, as we have seen, in failure. The orthodox party had succeeded in suppressing completely the efforts of the "innovators" with the aid of the government. It was a Pyrrhic victory, however. As a result, Judaism suffered great defections from its ranks. Reform was an absolute need, but the rabbis of the traditional school were blind to the signs of the times. Their signal defeat seemed to lame the energies of the progressists, and it was years before another active effort was made in the Prussian capital to organize a second movement along similar lines. But the ideas that swayed the Berlin reformers were not confined to any one place. They were in the air as it were; the need was being felt generally for an intelligent expression of the underlying principles of the faith in accordance with the culture of the time. Thus, for example, although preaching in German had been forbidden in Berlin, it continued at Dessau²; and it was not long ere the practice became quite general in Southern Germany; as early as 1814 the confirmation³ had been introduced by the Jewish congregations of Denmark at the command of the government; in Austria the candidates for the rabbinical office were required to have a university education by a decree issued in the year 1820, and besides the use of the vernacular was commanded; sporadic though these phenomena were, yet were they all indicative of the general unrest that was

¹ Geiger, *Geschichte der Juden in Berlin*, 251.

² *Supra*, 67.

³ For an account of the introduction of the ceremony of confirmation into Judaism see the author's *Confirmation in the Synagogue*, Year Book of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, No. I.

agitating Jewry and the desire for liturgical reforms of some kind.

Of all the early attempts that of the so-called Hamburg Temple congregation aroused the most wide-spread attention; several of the most important contests between the old and the new school were waged about this as the storm centre. In 1817 Eduard Kley, who had been one of the preachers of the private reform temple of Jacob Herz Beer in Berlin, had removed from that city to Hamburg to accept the post of director of the Jewish free school in the Hanseatic city. He began to agitate for a reformed service almost immediately, and finding a number of sympathizers, he organized together with these a reform society; they at once took active steps for the erection of a house of worship, and on October 18, 1818, dedicated the building that became famous as the Hamburg Temple. The bitterest opposition was engendered. The three rabbis of Hamburg set all things in motion to suppress the new movement. The Hamburg reform movement is of especial importance, because it was the occasion of the first definite official clash between the two tendencies in Judaism. The issue was not as clear-cut as it might have been because the reformers hedged considerably; although ostensibly a protest against rabbinism, yet when the test came they sought to justify their reforms from the rabbinical standpoint instead of standing fully and uncompromisingly upon the right of instituting such changes of custom and interpretation as the modified requirements of their day demanded. The Talmud was the norm of authority for rabbinism; for centuries Judaism had been held to be synonymous with Talmudism; it excites little wonder therefore that the early reformers sought to find Talmudical support for their innovations; it was an artificial attempt; the spirit of the new time was opposed to the spirit of rabbinism, and the religious view-point of the Jew, the emancipated citizen of the state, was altogether different from that of his forefather, the

excluded pariah of the ghetto. Like all compromises, this too was unsatisfactory, but it was not recognized to be so till a later day. The introduction of the first reforms really sounded the death-knell of the authority of the Talmud as the absolute rule for Jewish practice; years before the reform movement took shape life had decided the question; to all intents and purposes the Talmud, or rather its codification, the *Shulchan Arukh*, had lost its hold as the rule of practice for many Jews; officially, it is true, it was still recognized, and the struggle promised to be long and bitter ere its authority would be definitely renounced by any representative body¹. From our present point of vantage we see that the issue between the party of tradition and the party of reform was clear and decided; they represented two incompatible tendencies; the former held that every jot and tittle of past custom and practice had eternal validity and could not be changed; the latter declared that the dead hand of the past must not be permitted to rest upon the present, and that, unless the expression of the religion conformed with the requirements of living men, these would drift away from its influence altogether. The one party defended the principle of stability and immutableness in religious practice, the other that of progress and change. But in the formative years this difference was not consistently adhered to. As just said, the reformers attempted to base the validity of their reforms on the authority of the Talmud, thus showing that they themselves were not thoroughly cognizant of the real significance of the movement they were sponsoring. They were really struggling in the dark. There was no definite programme founded upon clearly enunciated principles. Reform in its first stadium then was an inadequate though honest effort to meet the almost revolutionary

¹ This was done by the Central Conference of American Rabbis at the Rochester meeting in July, 1895; see *Yearbook of Central Conference*, No. 6, p. 63; also the author's "Progress of the Jewish Reform Movement in the United States," *J. Q. R.*, X, 87.

change that had taken place in Jewry consequent upon the civil, social, and intellectual emancipation that had thrown them from the isolation of the ghetto into the companionship of the world. The truth must be confessed that the men who fathered the reform movement were not equal to the task. They had not the philosophical breadth to comprehend the real significance of the conditions they were attempting to meet. This grows very apparent from the Hamburg movement. There is no thoroughgoing definiteness¹. The three distinctive features that marked the Temple as a departure from traditional lines were for the most part opportunistic. These three features were—some changes in the liturgy, notably in the prayers for the coming of the personal Messiah; the introduction of German prayers; and the use of the organ. Here again we note the same fact as we did in connexion with the initial steps towards reform taken by Jacobson at Seesen. The aestheticization of the service was the seeming be-all and end-all of the work of the reformers. True, the partial omission and partial modification of the traditional prayers for the coming of the personal Messiah are an indication that there was some consciousness of the deeper significance of the changed phase whereon Judaism had entered. But even here there was not entire consistency. Some prayers for the restoration of Zion and the coming of a deliverer in the person of a Messiah were retained. In his masterly critique of the inconsistencies in the Hamburg Temple Prayer-book Geiger says that the position taken on this point “looks entirely too much like a compromise; there is apparent the desire not to surrender the old view, but to evade its injurious effects²”; and with deep insight he sums up in a sentence the merits and the defects of this first reform Prayer-book when he declares that the principle which guided those who arranged and edited this new order of prayers was “to re-establish the external

¹ Jost, *Culturgeschichte zur neueren Geschichte d. Israeliten*, III, 23.

² *Nachgelassene Schriften*, I, 162.

conditions of devotion without clashing too much with the current views on prayer, and to remove such passages as were in conflict with the civil position of the Jews"; there was but little attempt at a thorough reform of the service by which alone the demands of the devout disposition could be satisfied¹. The time was out of joint as far as the religious situation among the Jews was concerned, and commendable as were the unselfish efforts of Kley and his associates, L. J. Riesser, M. J. Bresselau, S. J. Fränkel, and others, still did they have no full grasp of the principles involved². Yet have the formation of this Hamburg reform congregation and the dedication of its first temple become historic in Jewish annals because of the consequences. The three rabbis of Hamburg, Baruch ben Meir Osers, Moses Jacob Jafe, and Jechiel Michael Speier, issued a proclamation denouncing the heresies of the new movement. Feeling ran very high. L. J. Riesser, the son-in-law of Raphael Kohn, rabbi of Altona, and father of the great advocate, the central figure in the stirring history of Jewish emancipation in Germany, Gabriel Riesser, issued an address to his co-religionists in Hamburg, counselling peace and calling attention to the fact that the need for reforms was undeniable³. His words fell upon deaf ears. The orthodox party now took the reprehensible step of attempting to induce the Senate of Hamburg to close the new house of worship. This caused the reformers to bestir themselves; the officers of the new congregation requested rabbinical authorities for an expression of opinion on the validity of the reforms they had introduced. This resulted in the publication of a volume⁴ containing a number of opinions favourable to the new departure. The most noteworthy deliverance in this controversy is that of Aaron Chorin⁵, rabbi of Arad in Moravia,

¹ *Nachgelassene Schriften*, I, 148.

² Jost, *op. cit.*, 23.

³ *Adresse an meine Glaubensgenossen in Hamburg, Altona*, 1818.

⁴ *Nogah Zedek*, with an appendix *Or Nogah*, Dessau, 1818.

⁵ *Aaron Chorin, Eine biographische Skizze von Leopold Löw, Gesammelte Schriften*, II, 251-420. Szegedin, 1890.

one of the most interesting figures of the early years of the reform movement. Chorin defends all the reforms introduced at Hamburg by citations from rabbinical authorities; he recommends these reforms as necessary, and condemns without stint the abuses which the reformers had taken steps to remove; he speaks a word of encouragement to the members of the new congregation, and urges them to continue in the work upon which they had entered¹. The rabbis of Hamburg also appealed to their colleagues for support in the stand they had taken; they received twenty-two responses². These all seconded the

¹ The last public utterance of Aaron Chorin was a communication addressed to a conference of Hungarian rabbis at Bacs in 1844. He died on August 24 of that year; on August 13 he wrote the communication in question; I quote a portion of it because it expresses so well the ideals that led this early reformer up and on. He had passed through struggles and persecutions because of his convictions, but at the very close of his life, after he had reached his seventy-eighth year, we find him as undismayed as ever in the cause to which he had devoted himself. We may consider this final communication as his rabbinical will and testament; he wrote thus: "The permanent elements of religion must be expressed in terms that appeal to the people and are consonant with the needs of life. If our religion and life appear to conflict with one another this is due either to the defacement of the sanctuary by foreign additions or to the license of the sinning will which desires to make its unbridled greed and its false tendency authoritative guides for life. If we will show ourselves as ready to strip off these unessential additions which often forced themselves upon our noble faith as the spawn of obscure and dark ages, as we are determined to sacrifice our very lives for the upholding of the essential, we will be able to resist successfully with the help of God all wanton, thoughtless and presumptuous attacks which licence or ignorance may direct against our sacred cause; the seeming conflict will then disappear of itself and we will have accomplished something lasting for God. I need not tell you that of all the external institutions the public service demands our immediate and undivided attention. He who is faithful to his God, and is earnestly concerned for the welfare of his religion, must exert himself to rescue our service from the ruin into which it has fallen and to give it once again that inspiring form which is worthy of a pious and devout worship of the one true God. For it is not only the excrescences of dark ages which cover it with disgrace, but thoughtlessness, lack of taste, absence of devotion, and caprice have disfigured its noble outlines." *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums*, VIII, 551.

² *Ele dibre habb'rit*. Altona, 1819.

position taken by the rabbis of Hamburg, and denounced violently the reforms without, however, giving any satisfactory reasons for their opposition. They simply condemned *ex cathedra*. Some of these expressions are characteristic and well worth citing, as indicative of the feelings entertained generally by the opponents of reforms in Judaism. Rabbi Moses Sofer¹, the celebrated chief of the Jewish community of Pressburg, Hungary, calls the reformers "infidels," "foxes which destroy the vineyards." He objects to the placing of an organ in the synagogue or the use of any musical instrument in the service on the ground that the Jews are in exile and mourning because of the destruction of Jerusalem, and therefore all music as expressive of joy and pleasure must be excluded from the service. The Prague rabbinate declared that the Hamburg reformers were "neither Jews nor Christians, but people without faith"; that "their prayers were sinful and their only purpose in introducing reforms was to curry favour with the Christians." These condemnatory responses had no practical result. The orthodox party did not succeed in having the temple closed by the government as they had hoped to be able to do. The reform congregation continued to flourish. Shortly after the dedication in October, 1818,

¹ Moses Sofer was one of the luminaries of rabbinical Judaism. His fanaticism against the reform movement was intense. He was the very antipode to Aaron Chorin, and since his final utterance also contains some expressions concerning reform, I quote it as representing the other side. In his will he gives his children parting advice and instruction in these terms: "Avoid the pernicious company of these evil-doers, the innovators who have removed themselves far from God and his law! Live not in their vicinity, and have no association of any kind with them. Touch not the books of Moses of Dessau (Moses Mendelssohn); then will your foot never slip! . . . Your daughters may read German books, but only such as are written in our spirit, in harmony with the explanations of our teachers of blessed memory. . . . Never say 'The times have changed.' We have an old Father, blessed be his name! who has never changed, who will never change." Apart from the polemical expressions against reform the document is permeated with a fine spirit and teaches the loftiest lessons. Published in Jost's *Israelitische Annalen*, I (1839), 354; see also Abrahams, *J. Q. R.*, III, 475.

Gotthold Salomon was called from Dessau to fill the post of preacher in connexion with Eduard Kley. Still, in spite of the fame of its preachers and their splendid activity, the practical activity of the congregation remained local, except for one achievement, viz. the establishment of a branch reform synagogue at Leipzig during the great yearly fairs or "Messen." Merchants from all over Europe gathered at Leipzig during these fairs, and the institution of a reform service in the year 1820 was missionary work in the highest sense for the new cause. The ideas expressed in the sermons preached here were taken home by the hundreds of strangers who heard them, and became frequently the incentives towards work along the lines of reform in their home communities¹. J. L. Auerbach of Berlin was the preacher of this cosmopolitan congregation. The congregations at Hamburg and Leipzig were the salvage rescued from the wreck of the ship of reform on the shoals of reaction. These two congregations, and notably that of Hamburg, existed on as the visible symbol of reform. The mere fact of this continuance was a great service to the cause. During the years intervening between the triumph of the orthodox party in Berlin in 1823 and the beginning of Geiger's activity in 1835 the Hamburg Temple was the one congregation in Germany that represented the reform principle, in spite of the inconsistencies whereof it was guilty in its attempts at compromise. "Is the rabbi consistent who germanizes and de-orientalizes his sermons and his theological disquisitions so far as language, form, and style are concerned, and at the same time worships with covered head and has his children do likewise? is he consistent if he recites the prayer *hanoten t'shua* composed for some Asiatic despot or Italian condottiere, and immediately thereafter speaks of civic conditions in the light and spirit of our century? is he consistent when he strains every nerve to have order and decorum in the

¹ *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift für jüdische Theologie*, herausgegeben von Abraham Geiger, I, 464 ; II, 493.

synagogue on the ninth of Ab and then permits torn clothes and unshaven faces on occasions of private mourning? is he consistent when he preaches conciliation and tolerance towards all and then does not dare abolish the prayer *welamalshinim* ¹?" These words, which a critic of the Hamburg Temple wrote in denunciation of the inconsistencies in its ritual and its service, showing that it had not gone the whole length of reform by any manner of means, may not obscure the great service performed by this congregation during the years mentioned; for "it cannot be gainsaid that it contributed greatly by its mere existence to the rejuvenation of the service in places far and near, and exerted a great influence upon the renewed discussion and treatment of this question²." Before proceeding to the account of this period of "renewed discussion and treatment," the time of the second generation of reformers, it is necessary, in order to complete the picture we are attempting to present, to mention a number of salient matters that distinguished the agitation for reform in other parts of Germany during these formative years. An edict regulating the affairs of the Jews in the Duchy of Saxe-Weimar was promulgated by the Grand Duke Carl Friedrich on June 10, 1823. It consisted of thirty-four paragraphs, whereof the following are concerned with the subject in hand; the whole service was to be in German, with the exception of the readings from the Torah and the Haftarah, which were to be in Hebrew, to be accompanied, however, by a translation into the vernacular; the benediction preceding the reading from the Torah, the benediction accompanying the blowing of the Shofar, and the priestly benediction were to be recited in Hebrew. A number of the paragraphs of the edict aimed at overcoming the disorder in the house of worship; thus the "Haman beating" on Purim as well as the beating of the breast during the confession of sins on the Day of Atonement was forbidden, likewise the selling

¹ *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums*, II, 210.

² Geiger, *Nachgelassene Schriften*, I, 176.

of "mitzwoth"; the frequent opening and closing of the ark on New Year's Day and the Day of Atonement were to cease; the prayers *adonai elohe yisroel*, *shomre yisroel*, and *kol nidre* were abolished; the Kaddish prayer was to be spoken by the reader in German and repeated quietly by the mourners¹. The district rabbi of Saxe-Weimar was Dr. Mendel Hess, one of the most ardent, I had almost said, most fanatic of the early reformers; it was undoubtedly due to him that these drastic provisions were included in this "Judenordnung"; all opposition to this decree was crushed by governmental aid; but the resentment aroused by the attempt to enforce its enactment was so great among the Jewish congregations that it was not carried into effect till 1837². Hess was guilty of the same unpardonable offence as the orthodox party in Berlin, viz. the invoking of the police power of the government in private religious concerns; he made the same mistake as did so many reformers of this first generation; instead of educating the people up to their ideas and founding reform upon a philosophical basis, they aimed merely to establish certain improvements in the service; reform in this light dealt merely with externals, while in reality it was a new interpretation of ceremonial Judaism.

In 1833 Joseph Abraham Friedländer, the chief rabbi of the Duchy of Westphalia and the barony of Wittgenstein, introduced into the synagogue a number of reforms. The orthodox party preferred charges against him to the government on the ground that he had violated the traditional ritual; the accusation contained seventeen counts; I reproduce them because they give an excellent idea of the status of affairs in those days when such insignificant reforms as these were considered so great breaches in the wall of tradition. The offences of Friedländer as enumerated by his accusers were these: the singing of the introductory Sabbath hymn, *l'kho dodi*, by

¹ *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums*, I, 101, 110.

² *Ibid.*, I, 25.

the choir; the responsive reading of the introductory Sabbath psalm, *mizmor shir l'yom hashabbath*¹; the singing of *sh'ma yisroel* by the choir; the abolition of the section *bameh madlikin*² and *ezehu m'koman*³; the placing of a pulpit in the synagogue; the responsive reading of the *p'suke d'zimrah*⁴; the singing of German hymns before and after the sermon; the abolition of the *n'ginah*⁵; the reading of the *haftarah* by the cantor instead of by some member of the congregation; the responsive reading of the *ub'nuchoh yomar*⁶ and of the *Hallel*⁷; the choral-like singing of the *yigdal*⁸; the prohibition to remove the shoes and sit on the floor on *tish'a b'ab*⁹; the confirmation service. The government declined to entertain the charges on the ground that such points of internal administration were without its province and belonged to the jurisdiction of the congregation. The reforms continued to be observed.

This Abraham Joseph Friedländer is an interesting figure; he was one of the few older rabbis who espoused the reform cause, the reason for which action he gave in these words in 1842 when he was eighty-six years old: "Thought cannot be checked. It progresses. Those who advocate the principle of progress in all other directions cannot

¹ Psalm xcii.

² A Mishnaic section (Mish. Sabb. II) on the Sabbath lights, which had been incorporated in the liturgy.

³ A similar section on the sacrifices (Mish. Zeb., V).

⁴ Psalms included in the service.

⁵ The peculiar chant in which the cantor read the Pentateuchal section.

⁶ The verse taken from Numbers x. 36 and spoken at the "Einheben," the return of the scroll to the ark.

⁷ The psalms of praise (cxiii-cxviii) read as an additional portion of the service on New Moon, the three high feasts, and the Feast of Dedication.

⁸ A poetical rendition of the thirteen articles of faith formulated in the Maimonidean creed and used as a hymn at the close of the service.

⁹ The ninth day of Ab, the anniversary of the Destruction of Jerusalem, observed as a day of fasting and mourning.

possibly expect that in religious matters alone antiquated notions should rule. If we refuse to reform our faith in accordance with the culture of the time we will force an ever greater number of the present generation, yes, I may say, the majority of them, either to become hypocrites or to find their faith uncongenial¹."

During these years of the interregnum, if I may so term it, between the activity of the first and second generation of reformers, i. e. between the collapse of the first reform movement in Berlin and the appearance on the scene of Geiger and his contemporaries, a period of some twelve years, although there was no agitation on a large scale and apathy seemed to have succeeded the strenuous labours of the earliest reformers, still was this only as a calm preceding the great struggles of the fifth decade of the nineteenth century that culminated in the rabbinical conferences of Brunswick, Frankfort, and Breslau in 1844, 1845, and 1846 and the formation of the Berlin reform congregation in 1845. True, various reforms had been introduced in a number of congregations in Germany, Austria, and France; but in most places the party of tradition held the official reins and the cleft between life and Judaism was growing wider and wider. "The number of those who withdraw themselves completely from all participation in the religious services grows considerably from year to year, not because they do not experience the need of true religious edification, but because the services in the synagogue, as conducted at present, are not such as to meet this need." Thus wrote an intelligent observer in Frankfort-on-the-Main in 1837². This expressed the state of affairs throughout Germany, notably in the larger centres of population.

However, it was not alone the dissatisfaction with the service in the synagogue that gave evidence of the religious

¹ *Rabbinische Gutachten über die Verträglichkeit der freien Forschung mit dem Rabbineramt*, 14 (Breslau, 1842).

² *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums*, II, 4.

unrest among the Jews, but the entire attitude towards the state, towards life, towards the future was different from what it had been in the days when the *Shulchan Arukh* was the *vade mecum* of the Jew. An indication of the usual condition of Jewish religious affairs at this time is presented in a document of the year 1835, an edict of the Bavarian government calling for assemblies of Jewish representatives, rabbis, teachers, and laymen in the various districts of the land to deliberate and arrive at decisions upon doctrinal, educational, and administrative matters; one of the reasons mentioned for issuing the edict is that there is no unanimity nor certainty among Jewish congregations as to what are the articles of faith; "there are differences as to the number and content of the fundamental principles; these differences exert a marked influence on the question of the civil position of the Jews¹." This points undoubtedly to the difference in the attitude of the parties of tradition and reform on the question of the return to Palestine, since this involved the fundamental consideration as to whether the Jews still looked upon themselves as a nation or merely as a religious community whose members had no national hopes and aspirations other than those of their fellow citizens of other faiths. Such and similar basic differences were involved in the changed interpretation that the reform movement was the expression of. The spirit of change was at work in many quarters, and I can close this study of the beginnings of the reform movement in Judaism no more effectively than by quoting an outburst occasioned by the dedication of a new temple in the city of Prague; this temple was dedicated on April 3, 1837, with choir, organ, German sermon and the abolition of the *piutim*; the *beth din*, consisting of the rabbis of the city, was present at the dedication; the editor of the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums*, the leading, in fact the only, Jewish newspaper of the time, was

¹ Geiger's *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift*, II, 435.

moved to supplement the report of this event with these words: "Oh, the change! In the year 1819 the rabbinate of Prague anathematized every such innovation in the well-known book *Ele dibre habb'rith*¹: thus mightily works the spirit of the age²."

DAVID PHILIPSON.

CINCINNATI, U.S.A., *June*, 1902.

¹ *Supra*, 513.

² Vol. I, 44.